

*dupo*

Purchased 1.00

VALEDICTORY ADDRESS

TO THE

GRADUATES

OF

JEFFERSON MEDICAL COLLEGE

OF

PHILADELPHIA,

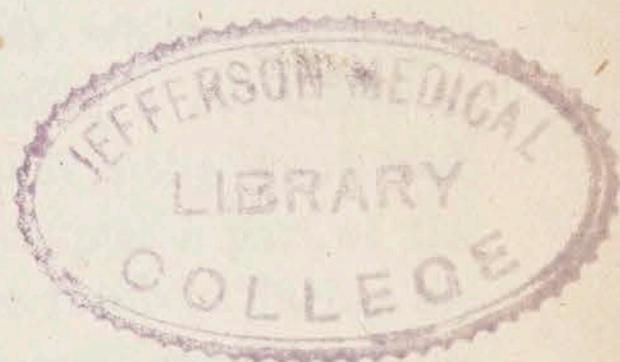
DELIVERED AT THE

PUBLIC COMMENCEMENT,

Held March 9, 1853.

BY

FRANKLIN BACHE, M.D.



~~~~~  
PUBLISHED BY THE GRADUATING CLASS.  
~~~~~

PHILADELPHIA:

T. K. AND P. G. COLLINS, PRINTERS.

1853.



# VALLEY ADDRESS

## GRADUATES

### LETTERMAN MEDICAL COLLEGE

Class of 1881  
The following graduates of the Letterman Medical College  
have been admitted to the practice of medicine in the  
State of California.

1881-1882

1882-1883

1883-1884

1884-1885

1885-1886

1886-1887

1887-1888

1888-1889

1889-1890

1890-1891

1891-1892

1892-1893



## VALEDICTORY ADDRESS.

---

It is with heartfelt pleasure, gentlemen, that I perform the duty, devolved upon me by my colleagues, of addressing you on this interesting occasion. The scene by which I am surrounded recalls to my memory the period, now thirty-nine years ago, when, like yourselves, I stood a graduate in medicine, just after the ceremony of receiving my diploma. I can recall the delightful feelings I then experienced, and can readily enter into your joyous emotions. It is, indeed, a subject of congratulation that you have brought your preliminary medical studies to a successful close. You have passed through many anxieties, and have attained an honourable proficiency, after toilsome studies. The labours of a medical student in his last year, while attending a full course of lectures with the view of becoming a candidate at their close, are of no ordinary kind. He spends many hours each day in lecture-rooms and in hospitals, and occupies a part of the evening and night in reviewing the instruction received during the day. These incessant labours and the attendant anxieties have impaired the health of some of you; and it is but right that the community should know how arduous have been your labours, and how dearly bought the honours which you have this day received.

After a brief period of relaxation, to which you are all entitled, in consideration of the arduous labours of the winter, you will make arrangements to enter upon the practical duties of your profession. You have arrived at the time, when it will be your duty to apply, in practice, the medical precepts which you have learned from your instructors. In beginning your professional life from this day, it is of the utmost importance that you should begin well; and, accordingly, I shall feel justified in occupying a part of the present address with some remarks, which, I hope,



may be useful to you as a guide for commencing aright your professional career.

The three chief means by which you can hope to improve yourselves in your profession, are observation, reading, and reflection. By observation, you make yourselves acquainted with facts as they are presented in nature; by reading, with the facts and reasonings of others; and by reflection you are enabled to compare and contrast these facts, to separate the apparent from the true, to estimate, at their just value, the deductions of others, and to give to your own, precision and consistency. Your main observations must necessarily relate to the healthy and diseased economy, and to those exterior causes which impress it either injuriously or otherwise. In order to observe disease methodically, you should take notes of all your cases. These memoranda will give precision to your therapeutic views, and enable you to trace more clearly the progress of morbid action. When your notes accumulate, you will perceive analogies and detect differences in disease, which mere desultory observation, without this aid, would pass unnoticed. You will thus draw a greater amount of fruit from your experience than you would otherwise do, and, at the same time, accumulate a fund of medical facts, from which to deduce therapeutic principles.

In order to keep up your knowledge to the level of the day, you should take, and diligently peruse, one or more medical periodicals. These will keep you informed as to the progress of the medical sciences, and at the same time make you acquainted with the more important medical publications as they issue from the press. The latter information will put it in your power to make selections of works, which your judgment may lead you to suppose worthy of your attention. In this connection I may remark that young physicians should always have some medical author in course of perusal. In the beginning of their professional career, it often happens that they have much time on their hands; and even when their practice increases there are intervals which are lost by many practitioners, but which might be usefully employed in making progress in reading the author in hand. By persevering and methodical reading in this way, it is surprising how much may be accomplished in a few years. A physician in full practice cannot generally do this; but must be content with



consulting his books when he wishes to elucidate some point, or to pursue a special subject of medical inquiry.

The long course of probation which young physicians have to pass through, especially in large cities, before they get into practice, forms a serious discouragement to many; and the interval is often one of great danger to the aspirant after medical distinction. If his perseverance be not great, he is apt to fall into indolent habits, and to abandon his profession. This interval can often be usefully employed in preparing translations from good foreign works, with the effect of increasing the medical knowledge of the translator, of making him known to the community, and, perhaps, of yielding him pecuniary emolument. The exercise here recommended is a good introduction to the composition of original treatises in after-life, when the intellect becomes mature and the medical experience ample.

I strongly recommend to you, gentlemen, to join the medical societies which may happen to exist in the counties and districts where you may reside, or to co-operate in establishing them where you find them wanting. These associations serve to promote harmony, to regulate professional intercourse, and to fix proper rates of professional compensation. Frequent meetings are generally inexpedient in these societies; as the necessary time for attendance cannot be afforded by busy country practitioners. Quarterly or half-yearly meetings, in the county towns, would be generally sufficient to secure their benefits; and, in order, if possible, to insure a good attendance of members, the delivery of an address, or the reading of a medical essay, by a member appointed for the purpose, should always form a part of the business of the meeting. As a standard for regulating professional intercourse, to be adopted by these societies, no better authority could be selected than the code of medical ethics of the American Medical Association.

In writing your prescriptions, study neatness and precision. Adopt invariably the nomenclature of our national Pharmacopœia. This nomenclature I believe to be accurate and consistent, and sufficiently copious to meet the requirements of all ordinary prescriptions. If you deem yourselves competent to improve the nomenclature or formulæ of that work, reserve your improvements against the next decennial revision, which will take place in the year 1860; and the Medical Convention, which will then assemble,



will, doubtless, give to your suggestions a candid consideration. In another way, you can be of service in improving our national Pharmacopœia; namely, by investigating the medicinal properties of the plants which may happen to grow in your neighbourhoods. You may thus be the means of introducing valuable plants to the notice of the profession, and of determining, with greater precision, the therapeutic rank of those now included in the secondary list of that work.

It will be your duty, as reputable practitioners, to oppose empiricism by all the means in your power. Your opposition should be characterized by firmness; but, at the same time, should be free from asperity. Endeavour to enlighten public opinion as to the scope of our profession, and as to what constitutes a medicinal agent, a remedy. Address the reason of those members of the community among whom your lot is cast. Repeat to them the memorable saying of Boerhaave, that medicines are not remedies intrinsically, but are only made such by their timely and proper use. Persons even of moderate intelligence can be made to understand that diseased action, by whatever name it may be called, presents an ever-varying aspect, and requires a constantly varying treatment. The notion, therefore, of an infallible cure for a given disease, or a specific remedy for any morbid affection, is an absurdity in the very nature of things. What would a captain of a vessel think of us, if we gave him a receipt for sailing from Philadelphia to one of the West India Islands? Suppose we should lay down, in our directions, the manner in which he should set his sails, and prescribe the position to be given to his rudder. What! he would exclaim, am I not to be influenced in the sailing of my vessel, by its constitution as a framework of timbers, by the strength with which these are put together, by its newness or oldness, by the quantity and quality of its cargo; and, above all, am I not to take into consideration, the direction and force of the wind, the nature of the sea I am navigating, the proximity of rocks and shoals, and a thousand other circumstances, bearing more or less on the main object of the voyage, that of reaching the desired port in safety? Now, the absurdity of giving a sea captain a formula for sailing his vessel, is not greater than the absurdity of offering to a patient, as is often done by officious persons, a receipt for curing his disease; that is, for steering the frail bark of the dis-



eased body into the haven of health. As in the navigation of a vessel, here also we take into view the framework of the body ; its strength and power of endurance ; its age ; and, in some senses, the quantity and quality of what may be called its cargo. During the raging of the storm of inflammation, we are forced, sometimes, to throw part of the cargo overboard ; as, for example, when we resort to bloodletting. Moreover, exterior circumstances have an important influence on the body, as well as on the ship ; such as the temperature, weight, and moisture of the air, the food, clothing, &c. Under circumstances, so varying, can it be possible that a given medicinal agent shall act uniformly as a remedy ; and is it not plain, that, as physicians, we must constantly change our remedies, to suit the ever-varying symptoms of each case ?

As connected with your duty to discourage the use of particular receipts as cures, you must be careful to avoid falling into the error of allowing your name to be attached to any medicine, or combination of medicines. This unprofessional practice presents several grades of culpability. In its slightest grade, it consists in not protesting against the unauthorized use of your name. The course is less pardonable, when the use of your name is permitted out of kindness to another, whose interest you are willing to subserve. But when a physician makes a bargain with an apothecary, to share the profits of a medicine, to which he lends the sanction of his name, he degrades himself to the level of a trading doctor, and deserves to be expelled from the ranks of an honourable profession.

It would be exceedingly amusing, were it not sometimes attended with deplorable consequences, to observe the prepossession felt by some individuals in favour of certain medicines as cures. Bountiful persons of this sort are constantly lauding their favourite medicine, and seeking out the afflicted, to whose cases they have a vague impression that their nostrum is applicable. They wonder at the obstinacy of the patient, who will not allow himself to be cured, and deplore the professional pride and mercenary spirit of the doctor, who does not immediately step aside, in order to allow them to carry out their benevolent intentions ! I have known very ill patients to be addressed, by letter, by officious persons of this class, and have felt no small mortification and regret to observe, that, in some instances, the confidence of the sufferers



in their medical advisers has been shaken, and their disease aggravated by the perplexity into which their minds have been thrown. These people, from their profound ignorance, view the science of medicine as a mystery, and can see no reason why they should not be able to practise a mystery, as well as the doctors with all their science. They would be startled at the absurdity of being called upon to repair a watch, that ingenious piece of human mechanism; and yet they undertake to repair the disordered motions of that master-piece of Divine mechanism, the human body.

It is not merely with these well-meaning but silly persons that you will have to deal; but you will often be annoyed by another class of individuals, both knavish and artful, who do not hesitate to trifle with the most precious interests of their fellow beings. Their craft consists in making bold promises; their victims are the ignorant and credulous; their end is lucre, be the sacrifice what it may of health and life. Even individuals, who conduct their ordinary affairs with prudence, do not hesitate, on some occasions, under the influence of delusion, to place their own lives, and the lives of those dearest to them, in the hands of these ignorant pretenders. It is curious to observe, sometimes, how incongruous are the diseases alleged to be cured by the same nostrum, and what incompatible properties are often attributed to it. Sometimes the bold assertion of virtue takes an amusing turn; as in the instance of the English quack, who advertised a pill, which would enable a young lady to enter a room gracefully, and make everybody happy. What success attended this laudable effort in favour of the English ladies has not come to my knowledge; but I doubt not that the proprietor of this invaluable pill must have realized an ample fortune!

It should be your constant aim, gentlemen, to improve yourselves in your profession. If you do not advance, you necessarily retrograde. Even if medical science were stationary, still there would be much for you to study, and to master more thoroughly. But, as it is constantly advancing, you must keep pace with its progress. Let no circumstance divert you from your main object, professional distinction. Allow no subject, foreign to your profession, to supplant it in your thoughts. Especially do I caution you



against launching your bark into the turbulent sea of party politics. You may steer for the port of political power, but the chances are much against your ever reaching it; for you will have to pass through straits full of dangers, will be run into by ungenerous rivals, and obstructed in your course by open enemies.

Beware, gentlemen, of professional jealousy, or the appearance of such jealousy. Defend the professional reputation of your brethren when you can do so with truth, and be silent when you cannot. Manliness and candour do not require that you should make known your unfavourable opinion of others; much less do they require that you should express such an opinion of a professional brother. Sooner or later, the incompetency of the badly instructed, or of the indolent who fall behind the medical knowledge of the times, will become apparent to the community, and the individual will sink to his proper level. But even if it should be otherwise; even if a plausible manner should blind the public, and give a bubble reputation to an incompetent practitioner; still it is better to bear the evil than incur the greater one of producing bickerings, heart-burnings, and recriminations, by pronouncing publicly an unfavourable opinion as to his fitness to practise. Besides, it should be borne in mind that your opinion, though sincere, may, after all, be an erroneous one.

One of the most important duties that will devolve on you as physicians, will be the education of young men for the profession, destined, as they are, sooner or later, to take your places. In performing this duty, you are to look solely to the interests of the profession, and not to pecuniary emolument. Persons unfit to engage in the study of medicine, from want of capacity or proper early education, or from having passed the teachable age, should not be received into your offices as private pupils.

On an occasion like the present, it is natural that we should take a cursory survey of the state of medical science, and of the means of teaching it in our country. Assuredly, medicine has advanced with rapid strides; and the means and appliances for teaching it have multiplied in a proportionate degree. Looking back forty-three years, to the time when I began my medical studies, its progress has been most gratifying. The rapid advance of our population has given rise to a great increase of our medical schools; and, assuming that the power of conferring degrees has



not been placed in incompetent hands, and that the standard of attainment, considered sufficient to entitle to a degree, has not been lowered, the multiplication of schools has been an advantage to the profession. Nevertheless, it may be doubted whether these assumptions, as applied to all schools, are correct; and hence, whatever evil may have arisen from indiscreet legislation in the several States, must be left, for its corrective, to public opinion. It is certain, however, that the object of a considerable number of medical students is not a mere medical diploma, but the diploma of a school of reputation, which has sent forth, in successive years, a number of competent practitioners, standing well in their several districts. That this is the case, is shown by the fact that many students repair to the more celebrated schools, in the large cities, to take their second course, and to offer for graduation, after having attended one course in the minor schools. Students from kindred institutions have, in this way, resorted to our school for a number of years past; and it is gratifying evidence of the estimation in which our diploma is held, that more than half your number are first course students of other schools.

It is natural that medical students should resort to large cities for instruction; for, by so doing they gain access to schools which generally command the highest medical talent, and reap the advantages of being in the midst of large hospitals, and of possessing every facility for the pursuit of anatomical science. Besides these advantages, ample opportunities are always afforded, in large cities, for obtaining cabinets of illustration, and materials for experiment. In our school, the means of illustration have steadily increased, and the instruction has been rendered more and more demonstrative every year. Those of you who have had the opportunity of examining our museum in successive years, can bear testimony to the accuracy of this statement.

These local advantages, and the exertions of my colleagues, have gained for our school a steadily increasing favour; and we have seen, in the session just closed, the largest class that has yet assembled within our walls—the largest, indeed, that, up to this time, has honoured any medical school in the United States with its attendance.

Gentlemen, you are about to commence the practical exercise of your profession. Let me entreat you to enter upon its duties with



those solemn feelings which the nature of your responsibilities is so well calculated to inspire. Do not allow yourselves to fall behind the knowledge of the day. If you permit yourselves to do so, you must be content with obscure mediocrity, if, indeed, you escape merited contempt. Envy not the irregular practitioner, who, by plausible arts, may gain a spurious reputation, and reap a golden harvest. His prosperity is only seeming; for he carries, within him, a guilty conscience which poisons all his joys. Conscious of his incompetency, he knows that he has trifled with the most precious interests of humanity, those interests which are connected with health and life. If the conscience were always alive, the pangs of remorse would form a sufficient punishment for the misdeeds of the offender; but as this is not the case, the strong arm of the law must sometimes interpose its penalties, to punish gross and palpable malpractice.

Observe the contrast presented by the career of a well-instructed and conscientious young physician. After entering upon the active duties of his profession, he probably goes through a probation of a few years, before he acquires sufficient practice to keep him fully employed. The time not occupied by professional visits he improves by medical reading, by taking notes of his cases, and by observation and reflection. He keeps up his medical knowledge to the level of the times; he finds his intellectual vision constantly enlarging, and adds, from day to day, to the stores of his professional experience. He grows up with the community in which he lives, and gradually gains their confidence in his professional skill. In consideration of his knowledge, both medical and general, his integrity, and the precious interests confided to his care, he becomes the idol of a large circle of families. In health he is received with a joyous welcome; and when disease invades the household he is looked upon as the instrument in the hands of a merciful Providence, from which they expect the blessings of returning health.

And even when his efforts to save are unavailing, the sorrowful event seems to draw him still closer to the hearts of the relatives of the lost one; for he has witnessed and shared their anxieties and sorrows; and the recollection of his assiduous attentions has sunk deeply into their grateful hearts. He becomes, as it were, a member of the family; for he has been admitted within the pale of their sacred grief.



Assuredly, gentlemen, the exercise of the profession you have chosen is environed with difficulties, and attended, on many occasions, with anxieties and sorrows; but, after all, you have it in your power to secure the precious consolation of always doing your duty. Though, on the one hand, it may be your lot to treat dangerous and irremediable diseases, still, in the great majority of cases, your exertions will be crowned with success. Look, then, at the bright side of the picture. Realize, in anticipation, if you can, what will be your feelings, when, conscious of competent professional knowledge, and of the ability to apply that knowledge skillfully, you become the means of rescuing from death some eminent member of society—perhaps the honoured head of a doting and dependent family. Can you conceive of a happiness more pure and unalloyed than this? Think of the tears of gratitude that will flow at the mention of your name, and of the prayers that will ascend to heaven for your safety and welfare.

In view of the serious responsibilities which, from this day, you are permitted to assume, it will be well for you, gentlemen, to ask yourselves whether you are prepared to encounter the labours and anxieties of a medical life. If you are prepared, this is the day and the hour when you should form the steadfast resolution to devote your whole energies to the exercise and improvement of your profession. You may labour long without obtaining more than a mere competency; you may toil for a series of years without winning the applause of men; and yet, if you are only true to yourselves, you will be amply rewarded; for you will secure that priceless consolation to struggling man, a peaceful conscience, and enjoy that greatest of all luxuries, the luxury of doing good.

The occasion which brings us together, though, in many respects, a joyous one, is yet associated with several sad considerations. We cannot fail to be reminded that to-day your instructors will see many of you for the last time. In a few days, most of you will be on your way to your homes, where near and dear relatives are anxiously waiting to welcome your return. The intercourse with you, on the part of myself and colleagues, has been of the most friendly kind. We have stood, as to most of you, in the place of your parents, watchful of your conduct, and anxious to advance you in your studies. After this day, these peculiar relations must cease. Nevertheless, gentlemen, be assured that we shall revert



with pleasure to the period of our intercourse, crowned, as it has been, by the exercises of this day. And, on your parts, you will not fail to hold in grateful remembrance your teachers, who have taken so much pains to instruct you, and who will always feel it as the sweetest reward of their labours, to hear of your professional advancement. In now parting with you, allow me to add, that, wherever you may go, and whatever may be your fate, the best wishes of your teachers will attend you; and their fervent prayers will be poured forth, that you will duly estimate the importance of your noble profession, and that you will exercise it with usefulness to your fellow-men, and credit to yourselves.



rich pleasure to the period of our intercourse, crowned as it has been, by the exercise of this day. And, on your part, you will not fail to hold in grateful remembrance your teachers, who have taken so much pains to instruct you, and who will always feel it as the sweetest reward of their labours, to hear of your professional advancement. In now parting with you, allow me to add, that whatever you may do, and whatever may be your fate, the best wishes of your teachers will attend you; and their fervent prayers will be poured forth, that you will daily estimate the importance of your noble profession, and that you will exercise it with an ability to your fellow men, and credit to yourselves.

Given at my residence at New York, this 15th day of June, 1841.

Yours truly,  
 Wm. L. Chapin

Received of the above named person the sum of \$10.00 for the purchase of a copy of the "Principles of the Christian Religion," as per bill of sale.